

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Throughout the year the Commission reviews, conducts site inspections and provides comments and recommendations on Alton Wetlands Permit applications to the NH DES Wetlands Bureau. In 2008 we reviewed a total of 71 applications, a 34% decrease from 2007. We attribute the decrease to the economic downturn resulting in less development activity. Applications included 32 Standard, 15 Minimum Impact Expedited and 10 Permit By Notification. A number of applicants also came before the Commission to present and discuss project proposals and impacts. The revisions and reporting requirements of the Shorelands Protection Act appear to have been well received and understood by those to whom it applies.

The Commission continues to work closely with the Planning Board regarding environmental impacts of proposed projects. Commissioners received 13 requests from the Land Use Office to review preliminary plans submitted to the Planning or Zoning Boards for proposed subdivisions, site plans or variances and provided written comments and recommendations.

The Commission provides annual funding for Lay Lake Monitoring of Lake Winnepesaukee, Half Moon Lake and the Merrymeeting River. This monitoring provides data to assess water quality of these important water bodies. Water quality reports for the lakes are available in Commission files.

The Commission is responsible for annually monitoring and reporting on 10 conservation easements in Alton totaling 258 acres and managing town-owned conservation land totaling 548 acres. In the Gilman Pond Conservation area, David Lawrence and Tom Hoopes checked boundaries and worked on laying out a public pedestrian trail along the north side of the pond. Boundary markers were installed on the Gontarz Conservation land on Muchado Road, and the boundaries of the Jackson easement off of Route 28 were flagged. No easement encroachments or violations were noted during the easement monitoring this year.

We would like to express our special thanks and appreciation to Building/Code Enforcement secretary, Cindy Calligandes, for taking our minutes, maintaining our records, tracking the Commission's activity on environmental cases and providing coordination with the Planning and Zoning Boards.

Respectfully submitted,

Earl Bagley, Chairman

Gene Young, Vice-chairman

Roger Burgess, Justine Gengras, Thomas Hoopes, David Lawrence